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On the Cover: New defensive coordinator, John Chavis, is already making a difference. Photo by Rob Havens '88.

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Howdy Ags!

This spring has been a special time in Aggieland. First of all, I want to congratulate our Men's Tennis Team on winning both the regular season and the SEC Tournament Championships. That's quite an accomplishment! I also want to congratulate our Women's Golf Team that won the SEC Women's Golf Tournament Championship. With four freshmen and a sophomore, these ladies had an SEC record-setting performance, and we are proud of them.

The Kyle Field renovation is on schedule, and steel and concrete are bridging the west side gap that will complete the stadium. On the practice fields, our football team wrapped up another successful spring, and watching Coach Chavis work with our defense sure did get me pumped up for the fall. Inside, you'll find a story on our three new football coaches and pictures from spring workouts. We welcome them to Aggieland and can't wait to see the changes they made in the spring.

Probably the most talked about team this spring has been our Fightin' Texas Aggie Baseball Team. They started with a twenty-four game winning streak and have continued to move up the national rankings all the way to the number one spot in the country. Inside, you'll find a story on the historic '89 team and how they compare to this year's club. This year's team has been so much fun to watch, and hopefully, our next issue will highlight their trip to Omaha. We wish Coach Childress and the team the best as they wrap up their regular season and compete in the post season.

With the NFL draft taking place recently, we decided to catch up with Ben Malena. You'll enjoy finding out how things are going for him in our Q&A story inside.

Good luck to all of our student athletes as they wrap up their regular seasons and participate in post-season tournaments. Let's fill up the trophy case this summer!

Thanks & Gig'em!

Rob '88

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snapshot





all smiles...

Coach Kevin Sumlin and new defensive coordinator Coach John Chavis share a quick laugh during spring football. Coach Sumlin had plenty to smile about as "Chief" made an instant impact on the defensive side of the ball. This truly was a snapshot moment as Coach Chavis was all business this spring, bringing an intense approach that resulted in a much more aggressive style of defense.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.

rivalry renewed...

Blake Allemand prepares to tag a stealing Baylor Bear during the Houston College Classic held at Minute Maid Park. The Aggies faced former conference foes Nebraska, Houston and Baylor during the three day tourney. They were victorious in every game, but the win against Baylor was super sweet!

Photo by Rob Havens '88.

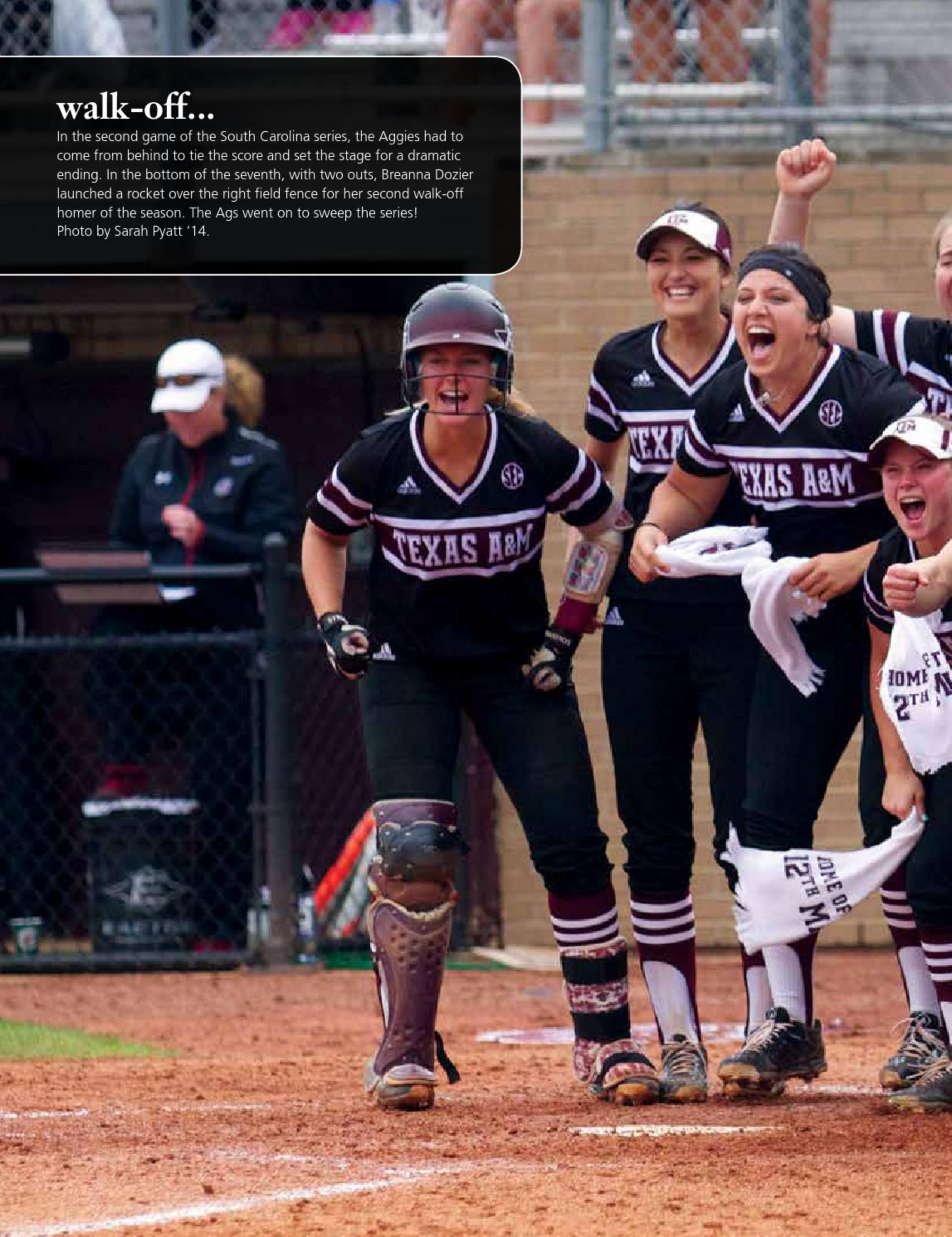




walk-off...

In the second game of the South Carolina series, the Aggies had to come from behind to tie the score and set the stage for a dramatic ending. In the bottom of the seventh, with two outs, Breanna Dozier launched a rocket over the right field fence for her second walk-off homer of the season. The Ags went on to sweep the series!

Photo by Sarah Pyatt '14.





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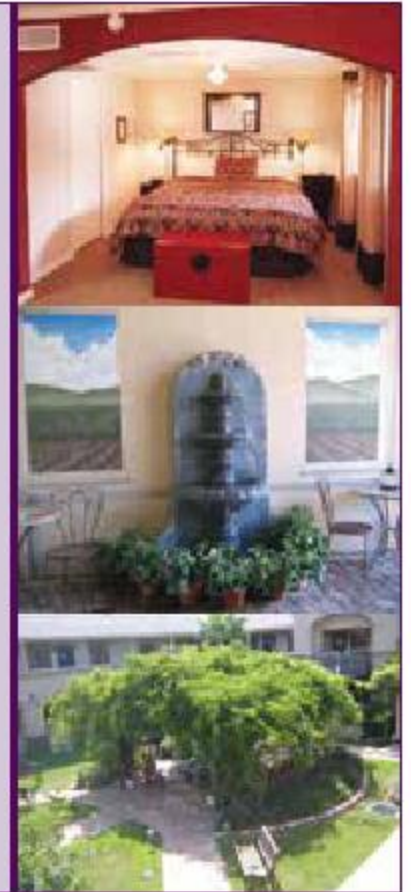


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scoreboard



[women's basketball] Our ladies were knocked out of the NCAA Tournament in the first round against 11 seed Arkansas-Little Rock. Without their point guard and star defender, Jordan Jones, the Ags struggled down the stretch and ended the season with a 23-10 record.

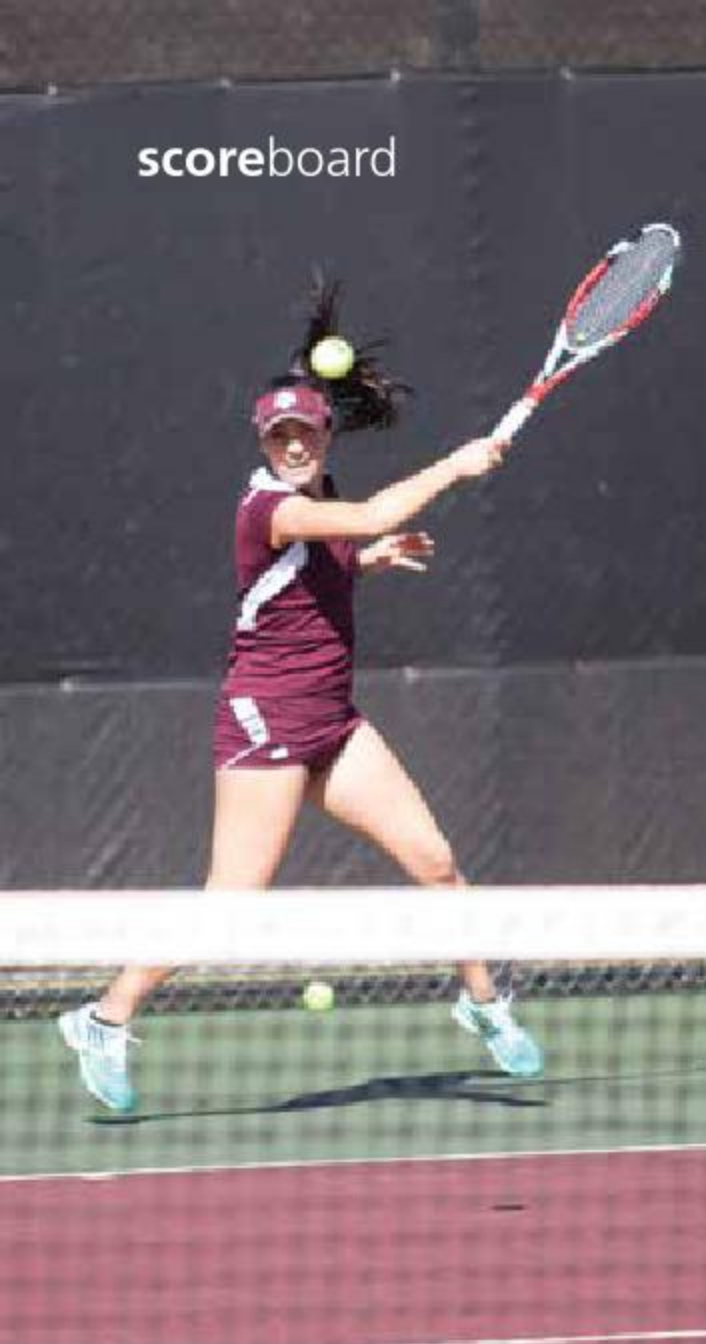
[men's basketball] The Ags lost 3 out of 4 of their final regular season games, taking them out of the Big Dance and landing them in the NIT Tournament. Without the services of their leading scorer, Danuel House, the men advanced to the second round but were taken out by Louisiana Tech 84-72. The good news is that House and Jalen Jones are returning next year, along with the nation's #3 recruiting class.



[men's golf] The Aggie Golf Team won the Reville Challenge Tournament for its first win of the season. Unfortunately, they struggled in the SEC Tournament and wound up finishing in 10th place. The NCAA Regional Championship began May 14th.



scoreboard



[women's tennis] The 7th ranked Aggie Women's Tennis Team finished the regular season with a 4-0 win over #21 Kentucky. They were seeded 3rd in the SEC Tournament but suffered a 4-3 loss to #24 LSU in the quarterfinal round. The NCAA Tourney began May 8th.

[men's tennis] The number 6 ranked Aggie Tennis Team double-dipped SEC Championships by sharing the regular season title with Georgia and then showing who was the best by beating the Bulldogs for the Tournament Championship. The Ags won the 4-2 match that had its ups and downs and even a rain delay to boot. Senior Jeremy Efferding clinched the final point in a three set 6-7 (2), 6-1, 7-5 win over #29 Austin Smith.



[women's golf] Number 13 Texas A&M posted a record 13 under par team score to win the SEC Women's Golf Championship. It was the program's first SEC Championship. The Ags fielded a team of one freshman and four sophomores. Bianca Fabrizio won the individual championship with a -9 tourney, followed by teammate Maddie Szeryk, who finished second overall with a -7.





[baseball] Aggie Baseball has been the talk of the town this season. They started the season with an SEC record 24-game winning streak. The Ags earned the number one national ranking and won every series until losing two of three to Arkansas. This team is on a mission and has set itself up to be one of the eight national seeds. With a strong finish, this team could be playing at Olsen throughout the post-season with a chance for a return trip to Omaha.



[softball] This young squad has produced big wins over #6 UCLA, #3 LSU, #6 Auburn, and #5 Alabama. Proving not only that they can compete with the best, they can beat the best. The regular season is coming to a close, but this team that has been ranked in the top 25 most of the season looks to make waves in the post-season.





Aaron Moorehead



John Chavis



Dave Christensen

New Coaches Hit the Ground Running

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Aggie fans have enjoyed watching our baseball team hammer homeruns over the Olsen Field fence this spring at a record-setting pace. But, the biggest homerun this year came from the other side of the railroad tracks when head football coach Kevin Sumlin hit a dinger with the hiring of former LSU defensive coordinator, John Chavis. Not only is Chavis arguably the best DC in the business, but Sumlin took him away from one of our biggest division rivals. Chavis has been a defensive coordinator in the SEC for the past twenty years. During the last six years at LSU, his defenses ranked in the top twelve nationally four times. His teams have made six appearances in the SEC championship game and three BCS bowl games. This spring, Chavis made an instant impact on the Aggie defense. Coach Sumlin said, "John Chavis has a long, highly successful career as both a defensive coordinator and a linebacker coach in the SEC. He has already brought

new insights and a great level of intensity to our staff and players as we begin preparing for the 2015 season."

In order to win championships in the SEC, you have to be able to run the ball. The Aggies' first hire during the off-season was made to accomplish that very goal when Sumlin brought on Dave Christensen to oversee the offensive line and running game. Christensen has thirty years of collegiate coaching experience, including stops at Utah, Wyoming, Missouri, and Toledo. He has the knowledge and drive to put the Aggies back on top of the running game standings in the SEC. "We are fortunate to have Dave join our staff," said Sumlin, "as he not only brings a wealth of experienced coaching acumen, but also a relentless approach that will benefit our offensive line and running game and carry over to the entire team." Christensen has been both a head coach and an offensive coordinator. His teams

have ranked in the top ten nationally in offensive numbers.

The final coaching hire of the spring was wide receiver coach, Aaron Moorehead, an NFL Super Bowl champion wide receiver who played five years with the Indianapolis Colts. He has been the wide receiver coach at Virginia Tech for the last two years. Before that, he served on the offensive staff at Stanford for three years. Moorehead's teams have been to five bowls, including the Rose, Fiesta, and Orange Bowls. Moorehead has the ability and know-how to take our talented receiving corps to the next level. With his NFL experience, Moorehead can not only teach but also show our receivers exactly what they need to do.

The three new coaches under Coach Sumlin's direction have jelled well as a group. Along with our existing coaches, they have added a new excitement and energy that will, hopefully, result in more wins this fall.

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Aggies Add Depth at QB

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Aggie fans were thrilled when Kyler Murray signed his letter of intent in February to come to Texas A&M. Unfortunately, the talented, two-sport athlete was expected to be a first round selection in the Major League Baseball draft, which meant we would all have to wait and see if he would actually make it to campus. On May 6th, Kyler tweeted that he was opting out of the MLB draft and would be coming to A&M to further his football and baseball career. This was incredible news for the program, which has signed the number one quarterback in the country two years in a row.

With the transfer of Kenny Hill, Coach Spavital was left with Kyle Allen as the lone Aggie quarterback with starting experience. During the recruiting process, the Aggies had put all their eggs in the Kyler Murray basket, and if he elected not to come here, the Aggies would be in a tough spot. Now, with Murray in the picture, the Ags have two amazing quarterbacks set to compete for the starting job.

The depth chart got even better when, only a few days after Kyler's tweet, Jake Hubenak announced that he would be coming to A&M. The 6'3", 200-pound transfer from Blinn College threw for over 4,000 yards last season, including 47 touchdowns. He will have three years of eligibility remaining when he comes to A&M. Hubenak was 19-1 as a starting quarterback at Georgetown High School and earned Class 4A player of the year honors in the state of Texas as a senior. After walking on at Oklahoma State, he transferred to Blinn for the 2014 season.

The addition of Murray and Hubenak give the Aggies more depth at the position and will create a lot of competition during the summer and fall camps. With the grind of a full SEC season ahead of them, the Aggies will definitely need this depth coming into the 2015 season.

Kyle Allen has proven he can lead the Aggies, and by taking all of the first team snaps in the spring, he should have an even better grasp of Coach Sumlin's offense. Kyler Murray is a phenomenal athlete and never lost a game as a starting quarterback in high school. Jake Hubenak gives the Aggies another quarterback with post high school experience that can throw the ball down field. Each of these young men should make our program better, and the competition in fall camp will only make them stronger players.

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BY ROB HAVENS '88

















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CEDRIC OGBUEHI FIRST ROUND PICK

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The Cincinnati Bengals took Cedric Ogbuehi with the 21st overall selection of the 2015 NFL Draft. This was the third year in a row that the Aggies' left tackle was drafted in the first round. Luke Joeckel was taken by Jacksonville with the number two pick in 2013, and Jake Matthews was drafted sixth overall by the Falcons last year. Ced attended the draft in Chicago and was able to receive his Bengals Jersey from NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

After suffering a torn ACL injury in the Liberty Bowl, Ogbuehi had to have surgery and was unable to perform at the NFL Combine. Draft experts expressed concerns that, due to his injury, he might slip into the second round; however, a week before the draft, mock draft boards showed him going late in the first round. Aggies around the country were pleasantly surprised when Cincinnati scooped him up at twenty-one.

At the end of last season, Ogbuehi had to decide whether to make himself available for the draft or come back to A&M, move to left tackle, and mature into a top ten draft pick. Aggie fans owe a debt of gratitude to him for deciding to come back, earn his degree, and be a leader on the 2014 team. He has contributed on and off the field and is an example of what hard work and dedication is all about.

The Bengals have acknowledged that they got a steal with the twenty-first pick. Without the injury, Ced would have easily been a top ten selection. The 6'5", 306-pound tackle from Allen leaves A&M with both a degree and the respect of Aggie fans that got to watch him succeed on and off the gridiron.

The Aggies have had seven players taken in the first round in the last five years. Von Miller, Ryan Tannehill, Luke Joeckel, Mike Evans, Johnny Manziel, and Jake Matthews all preceded Ogbuehi, showing potential recruits that A&M develops players and has paved a road to the NFL.



Q&A WITH **BEN MALENA**

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Can you tell me about your decision to come back to get your degree?

That's always been an emphasis of mine to come back. I know I left school early to pursue my NFL career, but it was already planned that I was going to return to school after I completed my first year in the NFL.

What will you earn your degree in?

Youth development.

So tell me what happened after the draft and what has happened since then.

After the draft, I signed with the Dallas Cowboys. I was with them all the way until the first pre-season game. My very first game, my very first NFL experience, I got injured. After I got injured, I was released from the Cowboys. I had to do rehab for about six weeks. The Houston Texans called and wanted me to work out for them to see if I was healthy; they wanted to see if I was ready to go. I proved to them that I had recovered from my injury 100%. It was week seven or eight of the season last year when they called me in for a workout; I did pretty well in the workout, and they signed me on the spot. I've been in Houston ever since.

What kind of injury did you sustain in that pre-season game?

I strained my left quadriceps muscle. It wasn't a serious injury; I didn't have to get surgery or anything like that. But the muscle takes extensive time to heal, so I was out for about six weeks. Right after I got healthy, Houston called.

How was your time with the Cowboys?

Oh, I loved it. I'm from Dallas, a Dallas native kid. It was really fun experiencing that and being a part of that organization, a storied program with all the great players. I had a wonderful time in Dallas.

Tell our readers the difference in college and pro ball.

I would say the main difference between college and pro ball is the mental aspect of the game. The college game is much simpler in terms of scheme, in terms of preparation, in terms of coaching. At the next level, it's not necessarily that players are bigger, faster, stronger. Well, they are, but as you get older you get bigger, faster and stronger, too. So, that's not a tough thing to adjust to. It's more of a mental game at the pro level than it is at the college level. The schemes are much simpler at the college level, and that requires less thinking and more playing.

The Texans had offered you a free agent contract before you went to Dallas, correct?

Correct. They actually offered me the biggest contract out of all the teams that wanted me. Fourteen teams gave me offers, but I chose the Cowboys because I felt like I could make their roster; go there and compete for a spot. Houston offered me the most money and the biggest contract as a free agent after the draft. So, when they came calling again, I knew that their interest level was still high. I just needed to go down there and perform.

When you were trying to make your decision on where to go, what types of things did you consider?

A lot of things: scheme, personnel, coaches, players on their roster, the types of players on their roster, trying to find a fit for my skill level, and which organization I could contribute to the most. I felt like Dallas, at the time, was the best fit for me. That's not saying there weren't any other places I could fit in. I just felt like, after talking to my parents and my agent, just making a personal decision, I just felt like that was the best decision for me at that time.

Now that you're with the Texans, can you talk about the other Aggies on the team? Have you built relationships with them?

All of the Aggies except Shane were my teammates at A&M. It was good to have those guys there that already knew what was going on. Randy Bullock was my locker mate. Travis Labhart was there, EZ was there. It just made my transition easy. They helped me. You know when you join a new organization and you don't know what's going on? They helped make the transition a lot easier. They helped me adjust a lot quicker.

Do you think it's motivational for our current Aggie players to see you come back and tell them about your experiences in making it into the NFL?

Sure. Cyrus Gray is my cousin, and it's been helpful just seeing him make it to the NFL. He's going into his fourth year this year. He can help me by telling me to stick with it, and he

gives me advice I can really use to flourish in this league. That's what I try to do with those young guys, Tra Carson and "Slim" Brandon Williams. I have a real close relationship with them, and every time I see them I try to help them with their game and give them a head start to prepare them for the next level, if they choose to pursue it.

Do you keep up with other Aggie teammates in the NFL?

Of course, you have to, you know? Once you're teammates, you're teammates for life. You always want to see your former teammates have success. Just earlier today, Von Miller, Tony Jerrod Eddie and I were in Dallas and got a workout together. So, we all keep up with each other, wish each other the best, and try to help each other improve.

You spoke to some kids at the Hard Hats for Little Heads event at Reed recently. Talk about continuing to give back to the community.

Yeah, I had a great time doing that. I was approached by Mona Osborne one day. She asked if I had free time to help out and I was like, "yeah for sure." I'm a youth development major, so I'm always trying to be a positive influence on kids. I spoke at College Station Middle School; gave a motivational speech to help them get through school and give them advice on how to succeed and handle adversity. I'm part of an after school program at Davila Middle School in Bryan to help kids with their homework, physical activities, and special activities. Helping out with the community is big for me. I feel like it's my calling to give back to kids and be a positive influence.

"I feel like it's my calling to give back to kids and be a positive influence."





'89

THE RECORD BREAKING TEAM THAT SET THE STAGE

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The 2015 Aggie baseball team started the season with an SEC record-breaking streak of 24 wins and no losses. As the victories mounted to double digits, it was only natural that fans and media started to bring up the program with the longest winning streak at A&M: the '89 club. Even though we've had some teams make it to the College World Series, the '89 team has always been my personal favorite. So, I reached out to the head coach of that team, Mark Johnson, to get his thoughts on that record-breaking squad.

"That was a very, very, very special team," he said, "and one that, had we gone to Omaha, probably could have been listed as the top team we had in my era. But not going to Omaha puts a little dent in that. You can't hardly say that. There were some flaws, but there were so many good parts to it,

and so many good athletes. It was just really special. I think number one, and the thing to remember, is that it's the only time I've seen it—and I've been paying attention for a long time—that we wound up finishing second in the nation after Omaha, which is normally divided up amongst the eight teams that make it there. For us to be ranked as the number two team in the nation after Omaha, I thought that was really special. It really made a statement."

The '89 club finished the season 58-7, with a Southwest conference record of 17-4. They would finish up as co-champs of the SWC with Arkansas. They were one of the best offensive teams to ever play at Texas A&M. Not only were they great hitters, but they also stole 133 bases during the season. Fielding a trio of All-Americans in Chuck Knoblauch, Terry Taylor and John Byington, the

talented team changed forever the atmosphere at Olsen Field. "Obviously, they set a lot of records," Johnson said. "I think they had the most wins. We didn't take the field; I never felt like we ever took the field like we might lose."

"I never felt like we ever took the field like we might lose."

Johnson told us, "That group engaged the fans into the game and they became a part of the game. In '87, '88, and culminating in '89, it was a fever pitch, even on Tuesday games. They were the ones that got their personalities and made the game into an event. It turned into more than a game when people

came to the ballpark; that's hard to get and we've been able to hold onto it. Rob Childress' group has been able to hold onto it. We still have a lot of interaction with the fans. They become engaged. That's the group that did that! It was a real special team. Really fun to be around and take the field with, and you felt like your guns were loaded when you went to the ballpark with that ball club."

"That group engaged the fans into the game and they became a part of the game."

At that time, Arkansas and Texas were both loaded with talent, and both teams earned trips to Omaha. During that year the Ags had epic and historic battles with the two squads, and Johnson said, "We were fortunate to share a conference championship that year, based on the major league talent that those teams possessed. When I think about them," Johnson exclaimed, "oh my gosh, how awful would it have been not to have a ring for that '89 team! And it could've happened very easily because it was that way." But, even long time Hall of Fame Texas Coach Cliff Gustafson was quoted as saying, "The Aggies were undoubtedly the best team in the country this year."

The Aggies went on to win the SWC Tournament and hosted a regional that year that included #12 LSU. In the first three games of the tournament, the Aggies pounded their opponents by a combined score of 65-13. The LSU Tigers had to double dip the Ags to keep them from going to Omaha. But as the saying goes in baseball, "Good pitching beats good hitting," and the Ags ran into a buzz saw on the mound that cooled the Aggie bats. The team was limited to only five runs in game one, 13-5. In the second game, an eleven inning affair, the team got only four and lost 5-4, ending their CWS dreams. The loss broke the hearts of the team and its fan base, and many Ags point to those games as the beginning of the Texas A&M/LSU rivalry.

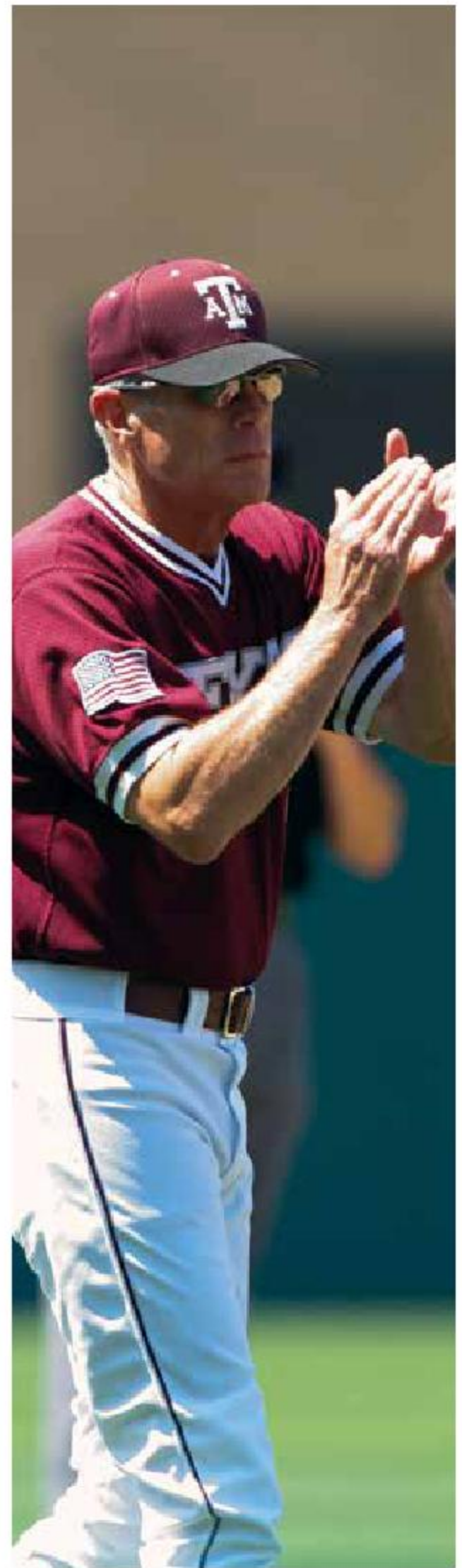
I asked Coach Johnson to compare this year's squad to his '89 team. Johnson said his '89 club was probably the best hitting team he ever coached.

"I think this year's ball club has better pitching. Thus far, that's certainly been their strong suit. Of course, they hit and they're doing a great job of what they're trying to do hitting-wise. There's a lot of give and take, but you're talking about two really good ball clubs."

When Johnson talks to fans about his different teams, he says the '89 club always stands out. "I can go anywhere in the city and somebody will start talking about Aggie baseball; they all know '89. They don't call it 'that team back then with' ...it's just '89. You mention '89, everyone knows what it is. You can talk about good football years, good basketball years, and I don't know if they know them by years; they will tell you who played on them and you identify it, but this is a name. It's a strong noun word "89." That's a name, not a year. It's a name! That's always been amazing to me."

Johnson believes the '89 club's place in history is locked in. I asked him if it was the best team he ever coached. "No, I can't say that; it would be unfair to the teams that went (to Omaha). That's the deal, you gotta get there. I don't fault the '89 team; I think it's probably the most valuable team to Texas A&M baseball history, to this point, just because they got the fans hooked up. They got us going. When I got here, the average attendance was 540, and we turned that around immediately. '89 brought a packed house, even on Tuesdays. I have a tender spot in my heart for them, but the teams that made it to Omaha, you gotta give them their dues. That's what it's all about!"

In talking about great moments at Olsen, Johnson says that he's been asked about the 1,000 wins. He believes, "Those 1,000 wins belong to the field, but the moments belong to us. I have moments that can never be taken away from me." Let's hope in 25 years, we're looking back at this 2015 squad and reminiscing about the moments they gave us.



"That day of the Byington bottom of the ninth home runs twice to beat Texas was probably the best day of my life as an Aggie sports fan."

-Rick Hill (P.A. announcer for Aggie Baseball for the last 23 years)



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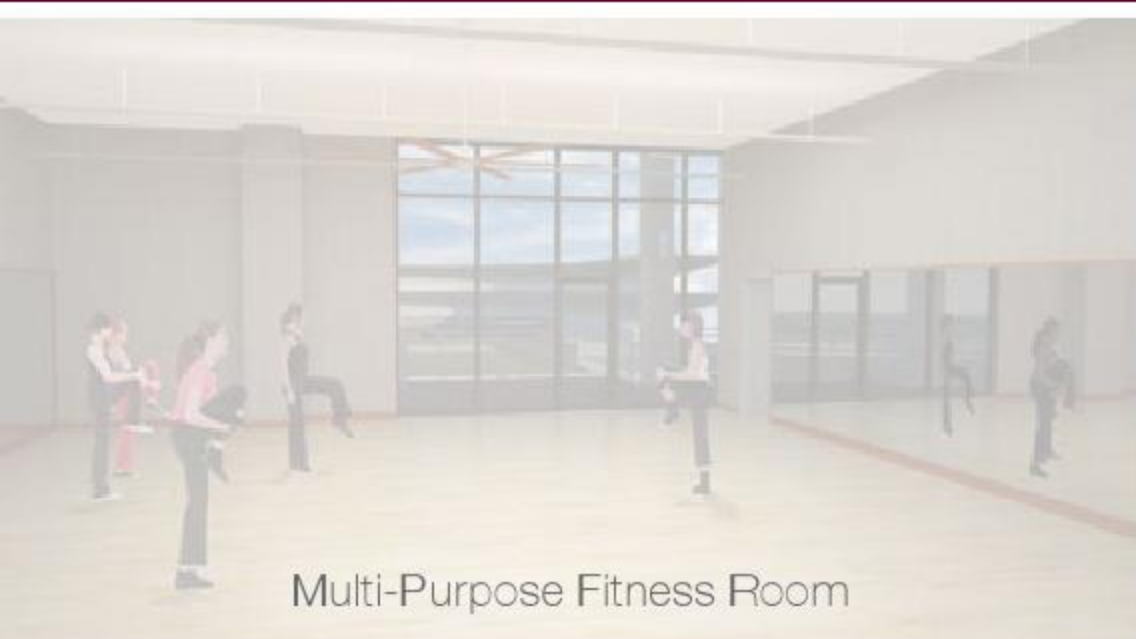
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Powerlifting Club

BY CHELSEA O'NEAL '17

The Texas A&M Powerlifting Club got its start in the fall of 1974. This organization was started because a group of dedicated athletes wanted to get stronger and compete. Scott Dobbins, the club's president, explained that a great powerlifter is made in the mind. "All it takes is mental discipline, and with enough time, dedication, and sacrifice, a great lifter can emerge," Dobbins said. What is unique about the sport of powerlifting is that it attracts people of all different body types, which allows for a broad range of people wanting to participate. Many of the lifts the athletes perform are designed so that when a person is good at one, they might not necessarily be good at another.

Thirty members currently make up the Powerlifting team at A&M. The team officially practices together three days per week, for three hours each practice, but many of the dedicated lifters practice five to six days per week. "That's where that mental discipline comes in; there are no days off," Dobbins said.

Visit recsports.tamu.edu for more information about Texas A&M Sport Clubs.

The team competes three times per year—once in the fall and twice in the spring. In the fall, the team traveled to the University of Louisiana Lafayette where they competed against ULL and LSU. The still developing team came out with second place in the first competition of the season. In February, the team hosted the Aggie Showdown competition as a fundraiser to help fund their travels to the Collegiate Nationals. This year at nationals, the Texas A&M Powerlifting team beat the University of Texas, who was looking for its third national championship. The men's team won its first championship in thirty-two years. Ironically, this win came on the 40th anniversary of the first team championship in 1975.

Scott Dobbins said his favorite part of being a member of this elite group of athletes is having thirty people in this city that he can call upon for anything. To him, that is priceless.



Women's Water Polo Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Water Polo is one of the most physically grueling sport clubs at Texas A&M. Unlike most sports where aerobic action is required in bursts, water polo athletes must sprint, defend, and wrestle during the course of the match, and when they're not doing that, they must tread water while on offense and defense. In addition, they must possess the ability to throw and catch the ball with one hand and have the precision to pass and shoot with accuracy while taking on an opponent that is wrestling them under the water.

This year's squad went 11-0 and advanced to Nationals for the third

straight year. They finished the regular season as the first place team in the Texas division. The young squad finished tied for fifteenth place in the national tournament.

Although it's not a requirement, most of the ladies on the team have previous experience playing the sport. The club practices at least four days per week for two hours in the Rec Center diving well. The first couple of weeks in the fall are used to teach new members the rules and work out the kinks for returning players.

Club president, Kimbre Watkins, who played four years in high school, said she joined to be a part of a team again. "I'm in love with the sport and this group of girls. They are some of the most caring,

intense, and understanding people I've ever met. It's an honor to be looked at as a coach by many of them. I've loved being president on this team because I've been able to assist and watch athletes that have never played the sport before grow into amazing players. There is nothing more rewarding than watching a freshman score their first goal against a tough rival like tu."

Watkins also enjoys traveling with the team for competitions. They have competed in Tempe, AZ, South Bend, IN, Atlanta, GA, Gainesville, FL, Burlington, VT, Minneapolis, MN, and Geneva, OH. Kimbre told AI, "The best part about traveling with the team, that practicing alone can't do, is being able to grow closer as friends and teammates."



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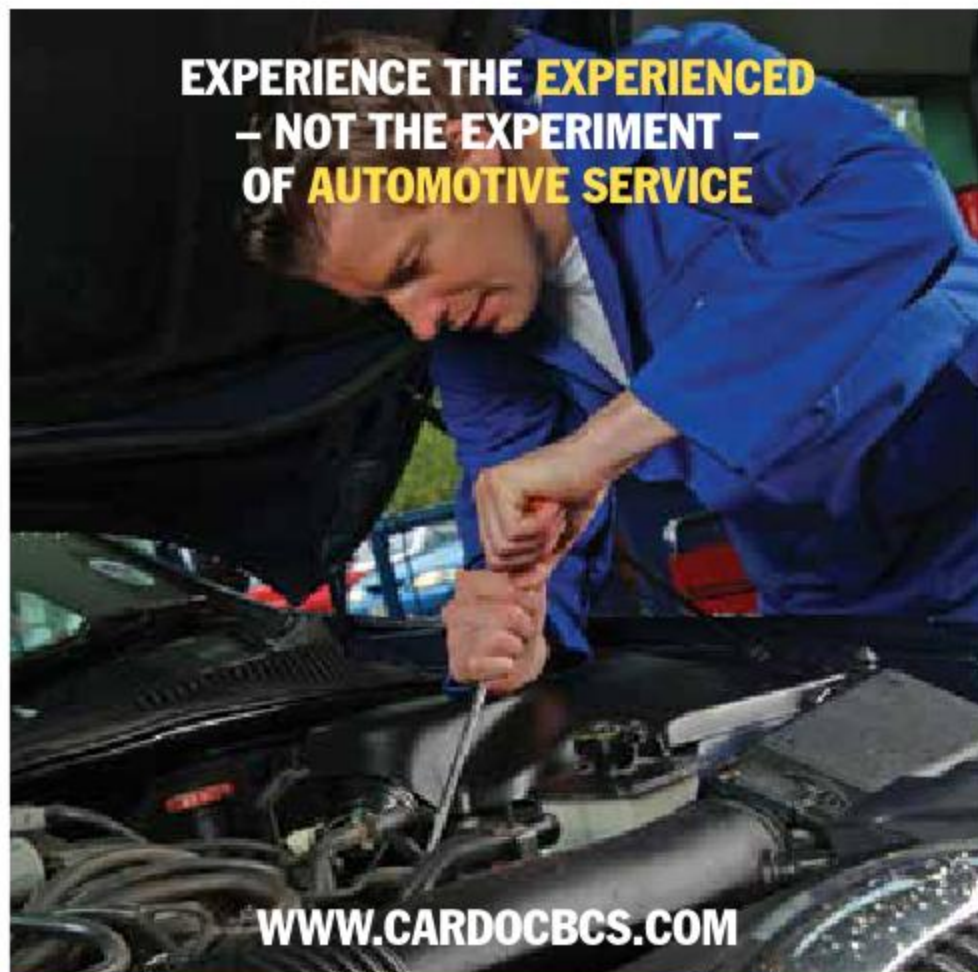
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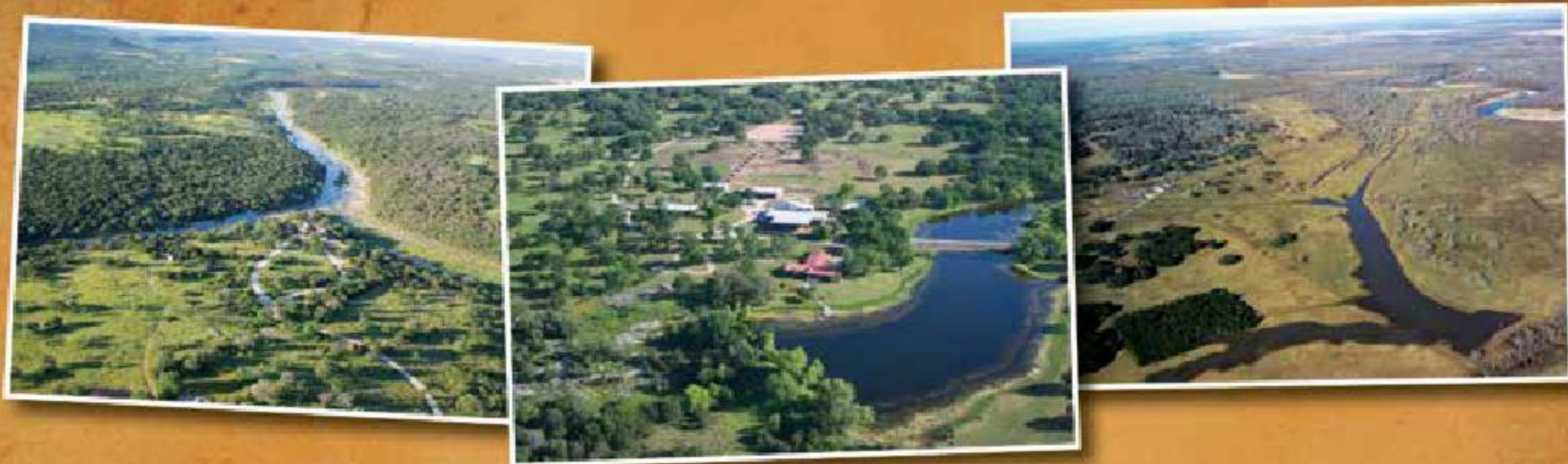


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